

LETTEE XVIII (*Continued*)¹

CAMP KALA KUH,
July 16.

THE call to "Boot and Saddle" was at three, and I was nearly too tired to pack in the sultry morning air. The heat is overpowering. Khaja Taimur no doubt had reasons for a difficulty in providing guides, which caused delay. The track lay through pretty country, with abounding herbage, to the village and *imam^ada* of Mak-hedi. There the guide said he dared not go any farther for fear of being killed, and after some time another was procured. During this delay a crowd of handsome but hardship-aged women gathered round me, many of them touching the handkerchiefs on their heads and then tapping the palms of their hands, a significant sign, which throughout Persia, being interpreted, means, "Give me some money."

The Agha is in the habit of gathering the little girls about him and giving them *brans* as from his own children, a most popular proceeding usually; but here the people were not friendly, and very suspicious. Even the men asked me clamorously, "Why does he give them money?" it's poisoned, it's cursed, it's to make them blind." How-

¹ From Kalahoma for the rest of the route the predatory character of the tribes, the growing weakness of the Ilkhani's

authority, the " blood
feuds " and other inter-tribal quarrels, and the unsettled
state of the Feili
Lurs, produced a general insecurity and continual peril for
travellers, which
rendered constant vigilance and precautions necessary, as
well as an alter-
ation of arrangements.